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581 589 had nothing but admiration for bachelors and old maids.

832 826 *The Essentials of a Woman's Charms*

As we discuss the requisites for a Santal woman to be erotically attractive, we confess, we were a bit bewildered at the mass of confusing statements that came forth from a large number of Santals of all ages within majority. When everything is boiled down, it can be stated that to have the proper 'sex-appeal' to the Santal, a woman must be plump and bear the dark-brown complexion of a "*magur mach*" (*Magur* fish, Silurus Pelorious, Tilios) as a tipsy old fellow put it with a rare naiveté.[1] Her hips should be fleshy, and breasts, firm and hard, like "*bel*-fruit" (Aegle Marmelos, Correa). Santals generally like women possessing an oval type of face with cheeks having a tendency to bulge out. They hate faces called "Bagh muho" or "bilai muho" (faces like those of tigers and cats). Curiously enough, the average Santals displayed a partiality for a pointed nose with a medium bridge in their women. This is illustrated by the sying, "Mutae usual nana

1 Mr. Fakir Chandra Soren of Baskonali, Bankura, told me that the best complexion was "tel sanja" (dark grey glaze).

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johotae jora lekae" (The nose high and thin, the cheeks as if dropping down). As regards eyes, they should be deer-like and a Santal would describe them as "Jil mènt' leka mènt' bareatae" (Two eyes like those of a deer). The pupils should be deep dark and not large in size. Santals evince a positive dislike for brown and grey pupils in the eyes of their women and the eyes characterised in Bengal as "pòtòl chera chokh" are at a discount. The ears should be thin and medium. The eye-brows, according to them, should have hair, but they must not be thick and long in growth and the eye-lashes must be thin and less in the lower lid.

A head of the darkest hair, thin and long, is what some middle-aged educated Santals would admire most in women-folk. We have, however, met some who professed a liking for girls with curly hair, but they opined that women have no corresponding liking for curly hair in men.

The type of the 'body beautiful' applauded in Sanskrit poetry is "straight as a stick." Santals, however, like a straight figure, but the body must not be thin as a stick. It should be, as stated before, plump but not fat, with a thin waist-line, fleshy hips and thighs. And above all, women must not trot or amble and their bearing should be dignified.

As regards the likings of Santals for the primary sexual characters in their women, the results of our

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enquiry were a bit confusing. Whatever that may be, it appeared certain that they like a fairly large penis in men and a medium but tight vagina in women. In secondary sexual characters, the Santals were unanimous in stating that the men look at the breasts of women first of all, the eyes and hips being of next but important objects of attention.

Breasts of women are distinguished by custom by various names and symbols. A little detail may prove interesting to the reader. Imagine two Santal youths are passing by. A girl crosses them. One of the Santals may remark, "Ona bar paisa jucu jil." Literally it means "that share of meat worth two pice." It may be explained that in the countryside meat is sold in shares and the height of the meat, by a figure of speech, really refers to the breasts of the woman, who, if she chances to hear the expression will blush, for, she knows the meaning only too well. Breasts are classified in various types. The firm and hard breasts are called "Bèrèl siñjo nunu" (Breasts like the *Bel*-fruits, *Aegle Marmelos, Correa*), the type most admired and celebrated in folk-songs. Those standing up straight and strong are called *Ocot'*, which in Mayurbhanj Santali means "the hump of a bullock." Such types are also termed "Poraeni nunu" (Breasts like the White Lotus of the Nile, *Nymphoea Lotus* Linn.). A middle but a bit rounded size is poeti-

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cally enough termed "Kadam Baha." (*Kadam* Flower, belonging to a large deciduous tree, *Anthocephalus Cadamba, Bth. and Hook f.*). The variety falling down a little may be termed "Atur nunu" (Atur = to hang down ; nunu = breasts) or "Dandka Jhinga" (Jhinga = a cultivated food plant. *Lasia acutangula*, Roxb.) or "Kaita Jhinga." Unusual ones, are termed "Hotot'" (A species of pumpkin, *Cucurbita lagenaria*) or "Laua" (Gourds). Small and undeveloped breasts are classed as "Putka" (A puff-ball, a genus of fungi, *Lycoperdon*). The wrinkled ones are called "Jòknòt' nunu."

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The lure of breasts in a body beautiful, forms the subject of many folk-songs. One is quoted below:

Koṛa: Ul bele hòṛṇò tam ho,
Bel siñjo toà tam ho
Noà hòṛṇò noà toà do
òkòè lagat coñ

Kuṛi: Nalo babu jam ròṛ ase,
Nalo babu jam rag ase.
Noa hòṛṇò, noà toà dò,
Noà dò am lagat ge.
Noa kacha, noa panci noa kodo
Tòkòc kocòkò oyo aṭet'hò.

Koṛa: Nalo mairem ròṛ ase,
Nalo mairem rag ase,

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Noà kacha, noà panci,
Nalaṅg ge do laṅ oyo atet'hò.

(Translated)

Boy: Your body is radiant like the ripe mango
Your breasts are like two *bel-fruits*,
For whom is meant your body (for enjoyment), for whom the breasts?

Girl: Don't, O boy, don't speak about this.
Don't weep, O boy, for this.
This my body, these my breasts,
These are only for you meant.
This loin-cloth and this sheet,
Who will wear round and use?

Boy: Don't, O girl, don't say like this,
Don't you weep, don't you weep, O my girl,
This loin-cloth and the sheet,
Both of us shall use.

The other song in our collection refers to the changed condition of the breasts of a girl. It appears that two unmarried sisters used to sleep together in the "pinda" (outside verandah of a Santal house). The younger sister sings that due to the elder's persuasion, the size and appearance of her breasts have changed:

Am khàtir tege dàina pinḍaredòlaṅ gitic' akandò,

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Serha lekan toa dàina pàilà lekaen.
Onatege rup dàinà raput' cabayen.

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(Translated)

For your sake, O sister, we two sleep in the outside verandah.
My breasts (that looked) like the 'serha' measures, O sister, have become big like 'pailas';
Our beauty, O sister, has got shattered and disappeared.

Presumably, the physical appearance has undergone a curious change as a result of having lovers at night. 832 [826]

In sex-attraction, it is a glimpse of the breasts that leads to intimacy amongst Santals. These have their primary appeal in dances like the Lagren, when the two sexes mix together and their hands are joined. As the dance proceeds, the man gets warm and looks for a response from the girl-partner. He presses the wrists with a careful carelessness. If she presses in return, the man's elbow will frequently touch and press the woman's breasts. The understanding being thus complete, the girl now turns to her friends and complains of headache or of a tired knee, the man similarly offers an excuse and off they retire to some cover of leaves, away from the dancing party.

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833 826 As regards the part played by the breasts in the mechanism of tumescence and intercourse, it was gathered that the men fondle the breasts as a preliminary to intercourse. This is the first tactile contact preceding coitus. Kissing the cheeks and not the lips is the custom, and even then, it does not form an indispensable approach to the consummation. And although, the posture adopted in coitus does not stimulate the breasts, these are squeezed with the hands as will be clear from the folk-song quoted already (Dēṛ dēṛ ko men hili ho), nor does it permit of kissing, as the man sits under the raised legs of the woman.

832 301 As for the sexual basis of ornaments worn by women, wrist-ornaments are most liked by men, perhaps because of the tinkling sounds they produce. Older men seemed to like the "kharua" worn in the legs of women. The hair plays no unimportant part. Men comb their hair regularly by rubbing *mohua* oil, and after intervals of a week, they wash them with *markan basa* (the soapy mud).

832 826 [302]

832 Whatever that may be, to women it is the man of health and vigour who counts. He must have wonderful virility and potency to have her favours. Should a man be physically charming and possess all the arts of winning attraction, as capacity to tell stories, witty talks, proficiency in singing and dan-